WILLIAM & GEORGE.

THE RICH BOY

AND THE

POOR BOY;

OR

A contented Mind is the best Feast.

ADORNED WITH CUTS.

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FRONTISPIECE.

In Books, or Work, or healthful Play,
Let my first Years be past;
That I may give for every Day
Some good Account at last.

William and George.

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Children's Books

William & George.

A RICH merchant, named Gibson, had an only child called William, who if he had been good might have been as happy as any boy in the world, for he had plenty of every thing his heart could desire. He had new milk for his breakfast, meat, potatoes, and pudding, for his dinner, and always a tart or

milk for supper. Besides all these good things, he had warm thick clothes to wear in the winter, and light cool ones for the summer. He had a fine house to live in, a

good bed to sleep on at night, and a nice clear fire to sit

by when the frost and snow covered the ground. When the weather was fair he walked with his papa and mamma, and when it rained he went in the coach: to complete all, he had plenty of books to improve him in knowledge, and toys to amuse him when he had read his lessons.

I have told you what comforts and blessings William possessed, and must now give you an account of George Wilson the poor boy. George Wilson's father was a poor labouring man, he dug ditches, cut wood, and

worked in Mr. Gibson's garden, and had five children, of whom George was the eldest, and he was only eight years old. In the summer mornings he got up with the sun, and in the winter with the first streaks of light; his breakfast was a bit of black

coarse bread, and a draught of water, and then he went to assist his father in whatever his strength would permit. At dinner-time he was sometimes so happy as to have potatoes, or beans, or cabbage, but oftentimes nothing but bread, and a morsel of dry cheese, so that even hunger and his sharp teeth could hardly get through it, and at supper a lunch of coarse bread completed his daily fare. The same old patched jacket that covered him in winter from the cold, shielded him

in the summer from the sun; and when weary with labour he rolled in his straw bed, and never waked till morning. If the weather was fair he was thankful; but if it rained he ran through it, gave his old jacket and hat a shake, and thought no more about it.

As to reading, his father had neither time to teach him, nor yet could he afford to put him to school, but for all that George declared that he would not be a dunce, and never rested till his father begged an old book of Master William's of one of the

servants, and which, by dint of spelling and teazing every body first to tell him the letters, then the words, he at length got to read without spelling.

If I was to ask you which of these two boys was the most happy, you most likely

would suppose Master William, but if so, you are mistaken; he was a poor spoiled child, that cried for he knew not what. He had so many good things that he did not know the value of them, and seemed to consider all he possessed as the effect of his own merit, and not given by the goodness of God; in short, he was such a poor, whining, sullen, tiresome, idle creature, that he was as thin as a lath, and a torment to himself and all around him; on the contrary, every body loved George, he was the merriest fellow in the

whole village where he lived, for as he took care to offend neither father nor mother, nor indeed any one else, so he had nothing to cry for; he was thankful for all the happiness he enjoyed, and never failed to remember that all good comes from God, who, according to his wise pleasure, gives or retains from his creatures.

Merchants are liable to many misfortunes; and in a great storm at sea all Mr. Gibson's ships were cast away, and he was suddenly reduced to great distress, and obliged to go all the way to

India to endeavour to settle his affairs, or rather to collect the wreck of his fortune.

As Mrs. Gibson did not like to go among her former acquaintance now she was poor, she resolved to stay in

the village, and as no cottage

was neater, or cleaner, than Gaffer Wilson's, she went to reside there during her husband's absence.

Mr. Gibson had not been gone above a month, when his lady fell sick, and though the kind cottagers did all they could, she died in a few days. Master William now felt a sad change, for though Gaffer Wilson and his wife were very kind to him, yet he was forced to live in the same manner as their family did. At first he could not eat their coarse food, and cried to be waked so early, but he soon began to be

used to it, and daily thought less about his former dainties. George was such a merry hearty fellow, that he could not but love him, and on the long winter nights at his earnest request taught him to read, or at least improved him in his learning.

A year past, and the cottagers began to expect Mr. Gibson's return, and pleased themselves with thinking how happy he would be to see his son so well, but instead of his return, they heard that the vessel in which he was on board was cast away, and himself among others

drowned. This was a severe blow, and William cried bitterly, as did also George to see him cry, for he loved him like one of his brothers—"Don't cry, William, (said the kind-hearted boy, you make me cry as bad as yourself, and I don't think I have

cried ever since I can remember till now. If God has taken your father to heaven, you know he has given you another, for my father loves you as dearly as he does any of us—don't you, father?"

Gaffer Wilson did all in his power, as well as his son, to comfort William, and in time succeeded. Some of the neighbours greatly blamed the honest man for increasing his family by maintaining a stranger, and would have had him send the child to the parish; but he would not listen to them, but resolved to consider William as one of

his own—saying, "I will be a father to him, and teach him, poor fellow, to get his living, and when I grow old he will, perhaps, consider himself as one of my sons, and comfort me in my old age."

From this time William

was forced to labour, and though he found it hard at first, yet custom and the example of George made it soon easy; and by the time he had attained his fourteenth year, he was as hearty, strong, and merry, as his brother, as he called him.

One day that George and William were digging potatoes in a field, their father, Gaffer Wilson, joined them with a stranger dressed in deep mourning. He looked earnestly at the two boys, and his eyes seemed filled with tears. "It cannot be, (said he;) my son was pale,

puny, and delicate, that lad is ruddy, healthy, and handsome." The words of the stranger attracted William's notice. His father had been gone six long years, but he had not entirely forgotten him, and throwing down his spade, he ran forward and fell at his feet, saying, "Oh, my father, my father, has God indeed preserved you? —receive your happy, happy child—though exercise and wholesome labour may have altered his person, his heart is still the same, or rather it more than ever

is ready to pay its duty to you."

William's words and voice dispersed all Mr. Gibson's doubts, and falling on his son's neck he cried, "All my sufferings are repaid, is it possible that exercise and plain diet, can have made so great a change? What you have lost in learning, a willing mind can soon repair; and as for Gaffer Wilson and honest George, as they have been truly your father and brother, so they shall still continue; you shared all the wealth they possessed, and they shall

share yours, for I have returned rich enough to reward all my friends."

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